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The Rhodes not taken: A study of stereotypes toward student-athletes

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THE RHODES NOT TAKEN: A STUDY OF STEREOTYPES TOWARD STUDENT-
ATHLETES

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF
SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
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BY
ROSS BARTLETT
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Abstract

The present study aimed to examine whether non-athlete students and faculty hold negative stereotypes toward student-athletes in a university setting. Whether raters' own frequency of sports-related behavior is related to negative stereotypes toward student-athletes is also of interest. One hundred and fifty-five participants (113 females, 42 males) completed a demographics questionnaire and an online attitude survey for either a "student" attitude target or a "student-athlete" attitude target. The data indicate that non-athlete students and faculty reported significantly lower average negative attitudes toward student-athletes than compared to students with effect sizes ranging from small ($\eta^2 = .06$) to very large ($\eta^2 = .31$). Gender and frequency of sports-related behavior do not appear to affect participant attitudes towards student-athletes. Limitations for the generality of these findings are also discussed

Keywords: Attitudes, Stereotypes, Student-athletes

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The Rhodes Not Taken: A Study of Stereotypes Toward Student-Athletes

Research regarding student-athlete academic performance is inconsistent and incomplete at best. It may be possible that student-athletes are simply misunderstood. Some argue that the unique circumstances of the student-athlete population are often overlooked and not considered by university faculty, administration, coaches, and other students. Howard-Hamilton and Sina (2001) discussed the developmental and cognitive impact of college on student-athletes. The authors theorized that developmental milestones of student-athletes may be inhibited during college years because of unique demands of being both an athlete and a student. Specifically, student-athletes may form an ego identity that is based solely on their athletic success. Because praise and accolades are often more easily earned for athletic participation than for academic performance, student-athletes are likely to form an identity based strictly on athletic prowess. This limited and externalized identity can result in self-esteem fragility, leading to a poor self-concept that spills over into other domains. Furthermore, the student-athlete's inability to identify with the athlete role (e.g., athletic ineligibility or injury), may compromise their identity.

The multiple roles that student-athletes must fulfill are not solely responsible for these effects, however—the environment is also a large determinant. College is a time for students to learn about diversity of other individuals, ideas, creeds, etc. The University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) offers the following mission statement:

UCLA's primary purpose as a public research university is the creation, dissemination, preservation, and application of knowledge for the betterment of our global society. To fulfill this mission, UCLA is committed to academic freedom in its fullest terms: we value open access to information, free and lively debate conducted with mutual respect for individuals, and freedom from intolerance. In all of our pursuits, we strive at once for excellence and diversity,

recognizing that openness and inclusion produce true quality (University of California Los Angeles, http://www.wasc.ucla.edu/cpr_endnotes/Mission_Statement.pdf).

As the mission statement conveys, there have been active steps taken by universities to promote awareness of diversity. Despite this, however, it seems like the last bastion of acceptable prejudice in academia is against athletes. College athletes are bound with the task of managing two historically controversial simultaneous social identities—the “student” and the “athlete.” These identities are often characterized as being at odds with one another, fueling decades of debate over the appropriateness of even having athletics in college (Bowen & Levin, 2003). Athlete status is not the only factor to consider, however. Prejudice towards these individuals may depend on differences in class (socioeconomic status), race, ethnicity, gender, etc. and the interaction with the individual’s role as an athlete.

Hurley and Cunningham (1984) stated that a student-athlete’s “participation sets him apart—hero to some, stereotyped and dismissed by some, unknown to others. These reactions of the student body and the usual encouragement of his coaches forces him to isolate himself, to find his ‘family’ with his teammates and coaching staff” (p. 56). Too often the individual is praised and encouraged for his/her athlete role while the student role is dismissed and discouraged by academic authorities and within the peer culture. Jolly (2008) proposed that a cause for negative stereotypes toward student-athletes is the limited understanding university faculty have of the unique challenges that student-athletes routinely face. These challenges include managing time for homework and school while traveling on weekends for athletic competitions, managing the effects of physical exertion and exhaustion from athletics, and managing sufficient nutrition to maintain the energy needed to be a student-athlete. Jolly (2008) also emphasized the importance of considering the “student-athlete” as a unique population and

the need for universities to implement programs and allocate resources to encourage the academic success of student-athletes. The existence of these contradicting perceptions of student-athletes may initiate a self-fulfilling prophecy: accept oneself as an athlete only or as a student only. With these two options from which to choose, the obvious choice is determined by what is most encouraged—usually the role of athlete. The successful integration of student and athlete should be the goal, but barriers exist, further perpetuating this distinction.

It is clear that student-athletes experience challenges unique to participating in athletics (physical exhaustion, nutrition, traveling, etc.). Additionally, Student-athletes can experience challenges originating from the social environment unique to being in college. These challenges may include negative stereotypes and attitudes from faculty and peers. How, then, do these develop?

Allport's (1954) seminal work regarding prejudice, stereotypes, and attitudes offered explanations for how these concepts develop and outlined their intrapsychic mechanisms.. Human cognition is defined by the tendency to be efficient information processors, or “cognitive misers” (Devine, 1989). Humans categorize objects, ideas and others along dimensions of familiarity and similarity to themselves. Furthermore, mere exposure to a stimulus will enhance evaluations regarding the stimulus because of the increased familiarity (Zajonc, 1968). People have a tendency to categorize and group together ideas, objects, and individuals. Thus, separateness from other groups is achieved through this process. This tendency for separateness, however, can lead to a myriad of misperceptions, misinterpretations, and exaggerated thoughts or behaviors towards other groups. How does this occur? Allport (1954) suggested that categorization leads to generating certain expectations, which guide our behaviors towards others based on those expectations. The process also involves assigning certain characteristics to

categories of people, thereby allowing us to view people as belonging to certain groups. These groups can be referred to as in-groups and out-groups. According to Allport (1954), an in-group is any cluster of people that can use the term “we” with the same significance. An out-group, therefore, is the group that does not belong to one’s own group. The tendency to maintain the distinction between the in-group and out-group leads to categorization and stereotyping of the out-group. Discrimination and prejudice toward the out-group can manifest as preferential treatment to one’s in-group. Although hostility towards out-groups can strengthen one’s sense of belonging to the in-group, it is not required. As an example of the power of in-group loyalty, Allport (1954) stated, “school spirit is never so strong as when the time for an athletic contest with the traditional ‘enemy’ approaches” (p. 41). This no longer applies, however, when the student-athletes belong to the out-group of academia.

Expanding Allport’s (1954) theory, Triandis (1971) suggested the simplest explanation for attitude development is the need to understand the world around us, the need to protect the self-esteem, and the need to express our fundamental values. Attitudes can be defined as “an idea charged with emotion which predisposed a class of actions to a particular class of social situations” (Triandis, 1971). Attitudes are conceptualized as involving three overlapping and mutually influencing processes: cognitions (beliefs); affects (emotions); and behaviors (actions). The cognitive component of attitudes involves categorization. This process helps to alleviate the heavy workload placed on our brains by constant bombardment of information every day. Naturally, our tendency is to think efficiently and solve problems in the simplest, easiest manner possible. Categorization is a useful tool for this process, but, as with anything simplified, the less accurate the outcome may actually be. Allport (1954) described a stereotype as, “whether favorable or unfavorable, a stereotype is an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its

function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category” (pg. 191). As the definition implies, stereotypes are often more rigid than beliefs we develop purely on our own because of the social investments and categorization that are inherently tied to stereotypes. Allport (1954) suggested that the majority of attitudes that people hold develop from the interactions among friends and family.

The development of the affective component of an attitude is characterized by positive or negative emotion and evaluation of a target idea, object, person, etc. Triandis (1971) suggested that the affective component of attitudes is based on physiological arousal. Zajonc (1968) suggested that mere repeated exposure to a stimulus enhances the attitude toward it. The study consisted of asking college participants to indicate which word they preferred for 154 affective antonym pairs. The frequencies of these same words found in English texts were also noted. Results indicated that there was a significant correlation between frequency of words appearing in English texts and preferred words chosen by the participants. This indicates that repeated exposure to the words in English texts had a predictive effect on the words college participants preferred.

How these cognitions and emotions translate into action are largely influenced by prevailing social norms in situations and within the actor's reference group (Triandis, 1971). From a young age we are told by parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, etc. how to appropriately behave and interact with other individuals, which both perpetuates and reinforces previous norms of behavior. Social norms can vary in content and salience depending on many different demographic variables including socioeconomic status, gender, race, and culture. This process is interactive and dynamic, meaning that we strive for our behavioral—along with our affective and cognitive components—to actively reflect similar messages, salience, and meaning.

It is evident that attitudes toward others exist based on affective, cognitive, and behavioral components, but for people to ascribe such attitudes toward appropriate target objects, a method for identifying essential characteristics and traits must first exist. Asch (1946) is best known for his development of the theory of impression formation. Asch was concerned with the cognitive process one goes through in forming an impression about an individual's personality. Specifically, he was interested in understanding how different personality characteristics are perceived and ordered, and how they interact to form a unified impression of a person. The groundbreaking study included 167 university students who were instructed to listen to a list of adjectives describing a person and then asked to form an impression about that person. There were two experimental conditions: Group A and group B both received an identical adjective list with exception to the words "warm" (group A) versus "cold" (group B). Each participant was then asked to write a description of the person and then select the word that best described the person from each of 18 bipolar adjective pairs. Results indicated that overwhelmingly, the person in group A ("warm") was described much more favorably than the person in group B ("cold"). In a subsequent experiment using the same methodology, Asch (1946) substituted the "warm"- "cold" adjective pair with the words "polite" and "blunt." Results indicated that the extreme differences in personality descriptions of participants in group A and group B from the previous study disappeared. Discrepancies did exist between the groups but they were much less pronounced for the polite/blunt traits compared to the warm/cold traits. Asch (1946) concluded that a) people judge personality characteristics to function as either central characteristics (e.g., warm vs. cold) or peripheral characteristics (e.g., polite vs. blunt) that operate very differently in the cognitive process of impression formation and b) the various interaction between individual

personality characteristics (traits), rather than the simple summation of them, governs how individuals arrive at an impression.

This process of impression formation calls into question the accuracy of such impressions. Olivola and Todorov (2010) examined whether appearance-based inferences about other people were accurate. A total of 1005 participants provided data that the researchers collected from a website disguised as a political guessing game where participants attempted to guess the political party affiliation (Democrat or Republican) of politicians in the 2002-2004 House of Representatives elections based solely on a photograph. Photographs of highly recognizable politicians were excluded from the study and all photographs were standardized in size and background color. Half of participants were first shown female politicians while the other half were shown male politicians. Next, half of the participants were informed of politician base-rates. They were told that the proportion of Democratic politicians shown varied from 10 percent to 90 percent, always at increments of 10 percent while the other half of participants were only told that the proportion of Democrats could be smaller than, equal to, or larger than the proportion of Republicans. Each participant then completed 60 trials. Results indicated that the average accurate response rate was above chance (55 percent). However, participants who were informed of the politician base-rates were no more accurate than those participants who were not informed of politician base-rates. Specifically, these participants were significantly less accurate in guessing political affiliation than what would be expected if they relied strictly on the base-rates. The authors concluded that most people tend to rely primarily on appearances even when various other social cues are available, which actually hinders the accuracy of predicting characteristics of others. This reliance on appearance of an object coupled with other variables such as a simple adjective, can lead to the development of a mental representation of the target

object. These mental representations are then activated in future encounters with similar objects. The media are consistently reporting athletic scandals and controversies, from National Football League (NFL) quarterback Michael Vick's dog fighting scandal in 2007 to National Basketball Association (NBA) guard Gilbert Arenas' locker room gun incident in 2010. It is not surprising, then, that seeing a tall, muscular, college student who is wearing typical athletic attire walk into Economics 101 may rapidly elicit conscious or unconscious associations with a variety of negative cognitions and emotions. As demonstrated by Willis & Todorov (2006), evaluations were made within 100 milliseconds of exposure to photographs of strangers. Most importantly, these first impressions were not changed when raters were given more time to examine the photographs.

If some personality characteristics are more salient to impression formation than others, as Asch (1946) discovered, then which characteristics carry the most influence? Litman, Powell, and Stewart (1983) examined the influence of slight differences in physique on social impressions. The study included 100 participants who were asked to select a series of seven-point bipolar adjective pairs (semantic differential) that they believed best described pictures of different body types (endomorphs, mesomorphs, and ectomorphs). Within each body type, an extreme as well as normal body was presented for participants to rate (e.g., an extreme mesomorph and a normal mesomorph). Results indicated that slight differences in physique, regardless of body type, resulted in significantly different attributions about the target person. Specifically, less extreme body builds were rated significantly more favorable than extreme body builds, irrespective of body type. The authors concluded that stereotyping is "fine-grained" and is based on the cognitive evaluation of both simple and complex data.

Langlois, Roggman, and Mussleman (1994) provided some insight into these fine-grained cognitive evaluations of others. In a study that explored what variables lead to higher facial attractiveness ratings of participants, Langlois et al. (1994) discovered that facial attractiveness is largely influenced by the mathematical averages of faces in a population. These results further validate Zajonc's (1968) theory that individuals will develop a preference for things merely because they are familiar with them. This can explain why more average body types were preferred over extreme body types in the Litman et al. (1983) study.

It is clear that individuals evaluate others based on interactions among characteristics including body type, intellect, and other perceived attributes. However, there must be an explanation why individuals consistently acknowledge strikingly similar impressions about others using very limited information. Tajfel and Turner (1979) developed social identity theory, which offers three general theoretical assumptions:

1. Individuals strive to achieve or maintain positive social identity.
2. Positive social identity is based to a large extent on favorable comparisons that could be made between the in-group and some relevant out-groups: the in-group must be perceived as positively differentiated or distinct from the relevant out-groups.
3. When social identity is unsatisfactory, individuals will strive to either leave their existing group and join some more positively distinct group and/or to make their existing group more positively distinct (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40).

For this to occur, individuals must first internalize their group membership as a facet of their self-concept, the social situation must allow for intergroup comparisons, and the out-group must be a relevant comparison. Social identity functions to attain or maintain group superiority, which

translates to the attainment or maintenance of an individual's more positive self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Previous research on intergroup behavior conducted by Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Falment (1971) demonstrated that mere group membership can determine discriminatory behavior towards an out-group. The purpose of the study was to identify the minimal conditions that would lead members of one group to discriminate in favor of their in-group against an out-group. The study included 48 participants who were randomly assigned to a control group and an experimental group. Both groups were presented with a series of 12 sets of abstract painting pairs and participants were instructed to choose which painting they preferred. The experimental group was then told that they were being placed in either a "Klee" artist group or a "Kandinsky" artist group based on their painting preferences from the previous task. In reality, random assignment was used so participant painting preference had no bearing on which group they were assigned. The group members were then given the task of allotting either rewards (money) or punishments to other individuals who performed the painting preference task for both the Klee and Kandinsky group members. Each participant was presented with a matrix of numbers representing how they could allot the rewards or punishments. Results indicated that participants allotted significantly more rewards to individuals in their in-group than compared to individuals in the out-group. Additionally, the clearest effect on the disproportionate distribution of rewards was due to the participants' attempt to achieve the maximum benefit for members of their in-group and minimum benefit for members of the out-group, even if a strategy for common good for both groups was presented. The authors concluded that people act in terms of their in-group membership, evidencing an attempt to gain in-group superiority over other relevant out-groups.

Impression formation and the processes outlined in social identity theory become increasingly complicated with the more social identities each person holds. Athletes are extremely familiar with the concept of in-group membership and competition. For athletes, forming a social identity can mean being members of teams whose primary goal is to attain superiority over other teams. This ability to find a group identity does not necessarily translate to the classroom, however. But why does the tension between the simultaneous roles of athlete and student exist and why does it persist? One explanation is that athletics corrupt the academic prestige associated with college. Logically, one may reason that athletes spend countless hours perfecting their sport at the cost of time that could have been spent studying. The kernel-of-truth hypothesis states that stereotypes towards social groups may exist because they hold some accuracy. Does the data support this assertion?

Adler and Adler (1985) evaluated the relationship between academic performance and athletic participation at an NCAA division I school. The study spanned four years and included 38 participants interviewed throughout the four years. The researchers chronicled the student-athlete's perceptions and beliefs of others regarding the athletic, academic, and social environment of the university. The results showed a negative relationship between athletic participation and academic performance. Generally, student-athletes progressed through an early phase of idealistic academic expectations to a state of pragmatic detachment or apathy regarding academic performance. Contributing factors included the overwhelming expectations and demands of the athlete role, social isolation from other non-athlete students, and the athletes' perceptions that professors engaged in negative athlete stereotyping. The researchers concluded that college student-athlete academic performance is multifaceted and is largely determined by the structure of the university and less by demographic or other characteristics. However,

because the study included a small number of participants from one university, generalizability is limited.

Pascarella, Bohr, Nora, and Terenzini (1995) compared freshman year cognitive outcomes of intercollegiate student-athletes and non-athletes at 18 different institutions (NCAA division I, II, and III) throughout the United States. The researchers assessed the participants' mathematic levels, reading levels, and critical thinking skills using the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) at the beginning and end of the participants' freshman year in college. Results indicated that male football players and basketball players scored significantly lower on standardized measures of mathematics and reading comprehension as compared to non-athletes. However, male student-athletes in sports other than football or basketball as well as non-athlete students evidenced gains in reading comprehension, mathematics, and critical thinking skills. Generally, female cognitive differences were not as pronounced as males. However, they still showed significantly less development in reading comprehension as compared to their non-athlete peers. Conversely, critical thinking skills and scores in mathematics were equivalent between female student-athletes and non-athletes. The researchers concluded that intercollegiate athletic participation has a negative effect on academic performance of both men and women, regardless of institution level (NCAA division I, II, or III).

Pascarella, Truckenmiller, Nora, Terenzini, Edison, and Hagedorn (1999) conducted a follow-up study comparing intercollegiate student-athlete and non-athlete cognitive outcomes during their second and third years in college as part of the National Study of Student Learning (NSSL). The second follow-up (second year) included a total of 1618 (562 men, 1056 women) participants and the third follow-up (third year) consisted of 1037 (390 men, 747 women) participants. An estimated average precollege cognitive ability or development score (included

mathematics, writing, and critical thinking) was used as a baseline score for each participant. Results indicated that end-of-second-year writing skills and science reasoning scores for male nonrevenue-sport student-athletes were not significantly different than scores for non-athlete peers. Nonrevenue sports are sports that do not generate revenue for the university such as golf, wrestling, lacrosse, etc. Congruent with results found by Pascarella et al. (1995), male football players and basketball players evidenced significantly lower writing skills scores compared to non-athletes at the end of the second year. However, female student-athlete and non-athlete student end-of-second-year cognitive scores were equivalent. At the end of the third year, Pascarella et al. (1999) found that cognitive outcomes for male football players and basketball players were significantly lower compared to scores of non-revenue student-athletes and non-athletes. At the end of the third year, there were no significant differences in cognitive outcomes for female student-athletes as compared to female non-athletes. The follow-up results indicate that intercollegiate athletic participation has an impact on cognitive outcomes of male football and basketball players primarily. Non-revenue student-athletes as well as all female student-athletes show little differences in cognitive outcomes compared to non-athlete peers.

Some research suggests that athlete academic success and cognitive outcomes are negatively related to athletic participation. Do student-athletes agree? Lance (2004) explored perceived role conflict among university student-athletes at a southeastern university. A total of 169 student-athletes participated (100 males, 69 females) and completed a four-page self-administered questionnaire that included demographic information, and athletic encouragement/academic encouragement scale, and a ten item role conflict measure. Results indicated only two of ten role conflict items were statistically significant: Both males and females agreed that “it is difficult to meet both academic and athletic expectations” and that “it is

difficult to find time to study during the athletic season.” However, 84 percent of participants disagreed that “athletic demands of my work make it difficult to keep up with my studies.”

Gender differences were also found. Male participants perceived faculty as being significantly more academically inflexible than did female participants. Also, females reported significantly higher role conflict than did their male counterparts. Lance (2004) concluded that gender differences in role conflict for student-athletes do exist. However, the inconsistency of the degree of student-athlete role conflict in the literature suggests that situational factors (e.g., specific university structure) may be a primary contributor to student-athlete academic performance.

However, the research is by no means consistent in such findings. It is interesting that student-athletes do not generally believe their academic performance is negatively affected by athletic participation. However, self-reported opinions may not be entirely accurate, thus warranting exploration of other data. Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, and Hannah (2006) compared student-athletes to non-athletes in effective educational engagement practices (e.g., reading and writing, preparing for class, interacting with instructors, etc.) at NCAA division I, II, and III colleges as well as NAIA colleges. The study included 57,308 undergraduate college students (7,821 student-athletes and 49,407 non-athletes) from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) database. Overall, results indicated that male and female student-athletes are as engaged and in some domains, more engaged than their non-athlete peers. Specifically, NCAA division III student-athletes reported more academic engagement than student-athletes at NCAA division I or II schools. Although male student-athletes reported significantly lower grade point averages than non-athletes, male athletes reported significantly greater gains in general education than did non-athletes. Furthermore, NCAA division III student-athletes reported the greatest levels of educational engagement, campus support, and gains in general education.

Contrary to popular belief, student-athletes' effective educational engagement practices differ only slightly from those of their non-athlete peers, regardless of institution level.

Academic success of student-athletes has risen since the 1980s. In 1995, the NCAA initiated the Graduation Success Rate (GSR) to improve the accuracy of assessing academic success of student-athletes (NCAA, 2010). The standard measure for the overall student GSR is the federal GSR, which does not account for students who transfer to other institutions or enroll mid-academic school year. The NCAA GSR was developed to account for transfers and midyear enrollees. The most recent data for NCAA division I institutions (entering class of 2003) indicate that the federal GSR for the general student body was 63 percent, while the federal GSR for all student-athletes was a comparable 64 percent. The NCAA GSR for all division I student-athletes was 79 percent, which is the highest rate ever. The Academic Success Rate (ASR) is used to assess academic success for NCAA division II universities, which is similar to the GSR used for NCAA division I. The federal ASR for the general student body was 47 percent compared to a significantly higher federal ASR of 56 percent for student-athletes. For NCAA division III universities, the federal graduation rate for the general student body and for student-athletes were the same with 65 percent graduation rate. This data demonstrated that student-athletes nationwide and across all NCAA division levels have comparable or higher graduation rates than the general student body. This is valuable to help erase the perception that all student-athletes are "dumb jocks."

Richards and Aries (1999) also found that athletic participation did not impinge upon academic success of senior student-athletes at an NCAA division III university. The study included 219 senior students (73 student-athletes, 146 students). The participants each completed questionnaires that inquired about time allocation (in hours) per week, grades, extracurricular

activities, life satisfaction, stress, and growth. Results indicated that student-athletes and students were comparable in average time in class, time studying, life satisfaction, stress, growth, and overall grade point average (GPA). Student-athletes did, however, devote significantly more hours to extracurricular activities, reported higher ratings to items assessing difficulty getting invited to social events by non-athlete peers, and difficulty being taken seriously by professors. Overall, the data showed that although student-athletes reported higher levels of time commitment to extracurricular activities, they showed no difference in GPA; involvement in most aspects of college life; levels of growth, stress, and life satisfaction compared to non-athlete students. This research challenges negative stereotypes toward student-athletes based on misinformation about their actual behaviors.

Howard-Hamilton and Sina (2001) suggested that student-athletes find it difficult to progress through necessary developmental cognitive stages because of the structured nature of being on a team. Specifically, because coaches implement absolute rules and regulations required for athletic participation, student-athletes may not be cognitively challenged and therefore conceptualize other domains such as relationships, work, or academics in purely a dualistic manner (good or bad; right or wrong). The authors concluded that universities need to address the unique and complex developmental issues that student-athletes face at the college level to ensure intellectual and emotional prowess, in addition to physical fitness in the student-athlete population.

An alternative explanation for student-athletes' seeming lack of motivation in academics is rooted in self-determination theory. Ryan and Deci (2000; 2002), proposed that self-determined motivation is influenced by the need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The need for competence means feeling that our behaviors are effective and that we are adequately

able to perform certain tasks. The need for autonomy represents the need to believe we are in control of our own actions. The need for relatedness means we need to feel a sense of belongingness or connection to others. Anything that disrupts these needs can negatively influence an individual's self-determined motivation. Specifically, student-athletes tend to have very rigidly structured time schedules beginning at a young age. This may lead to a limited development of autonomy.

Amorose and Anderson-Butcher (2007), explored whether perceived competence, autonomy, and relatedness mediated the relationship between perceived autonomy-supportive coaching and athletes' motivational orientation. A total of 581 high school and college student-athletes completed surveys that assessed autonomy-supportive coaching; perceived competence, autonomy, and relatedness; and motivational orientation. Results indicated that the degree to which student-athletes perceived their coaches as autonomy-supportive significantly predicted their perceived competence, autonomy, and relatedness across gender and all levels of competition. This also predicted the student-athletes' motivational orientation. The more competent, autonomous, and related the student-athletes felt, the more self-determined (intrinsically motivated) they were. For college student-athletes, self-determination theory can apply to both student and athlete roles. Student-athletes may not feel a sense of competence, autonomy, or relatedness in a classroom setting, which could detract from their motivation towards academics.

Student-athlete scholastic development may be different than for non-athlete students. Bean and Eaton (2001) described the typical developmental process college students experience that lead to successful retention and integration in higher education. Entering college students constantly evaluate various experiences and inferred abilities via self-assessments, the most

important being assessments of self-efficacy, normative beliefs, and past behaviors. These self-assessments are used to determine how the student fits in with the university, how they are viewed by faculty and other administrators, as well as how they fit in with their peers. Bandura (1997) described self-efficacy theory as individuals' perceptions of their ability to behave in ways that will generate desirable outcomes. Individuals constantly use self-evaluation to develop an understanding of their efficacy for specific tasks. When individuals determine that they are competent with a task they gain confidence and develop greater persistence and motivation to succeed with the particular task. The opposite is also true. When individuals feel they are incompetent they will likely lose confidence and show less motivation in pursuing the task. Understandably, this reinforcing effect on the self-efficacy in college students is essential to understanding the process of development during higher education.

Do college student-athletes experience a similar developmental process compared to non-athlete college students? Miller and Kerr (2003) studied role experimentation of intercollegiate student athletes using in-depth interviews. The participants were drawn from a large Canadian university that is governed by Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS). The sample included four senior female and four senior male student-athletes. Results indicated that the participants' role experimentation was focused on three domains: athletic, academic, and social. Additionally, two distinct stages of identity formation were found. The first stage, "over-identification with the athlete role" described a period, generally the first year, in which the student-athletes primarily focused on the athletic role. This over-identification also defined the participants' social roles, but limited exploration of the student role. The participants revealed a heightened commitment to the student role during the second and third year of school, but tended to neglect the social role. The second stage, "deferred role experimentation," usually occurred during the participants'

fourth and fifth years. During this period, there was a marked decline in the athlete role and a significant increase in the importance of the student role. This delayed exploration of the academic domain may be a simple consequence of the common incongruence between attitudes towards the athlete and student roles many student-athletes may experience. The athlete role is positively reinforced while the student role is not. These results indicate that college is an especially critical period for student-athlete identity development.

Despite the research reviewed here, a persistent popular culture myth is that student-athletes are perceived as “dumb jocks” by faculty and other non-athlete students but are there any data to support such perceptions? Most of the research concerning stereotypes about student-athletes has examined patterns that occur at the NCAA Division I level. Engstrom and Sedlacek (1991) investigated whether prejudice existed among nonstudent-athletes regarding student-athletes and in which situations prejudice is most likely to occur. A sample of 293 freshman students at a large NCAA Division I Eastern university were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: One group (control) received the “student” form and one group (experimental) received the “student-athlete” form of the Revised Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) Student-Athlete. The results suggested that nonstudent-athletes possess some negative attitudes toward student-athletes. Non-athlete students reported suspicion and were less trusting of student-athletes who received an ‘A’ grade in class, implying most negative attitudes toward student-athletes are centered on academic competence. Along gender lines, women’s attitudes toward student-athletes were much more positive than men’s, especially with regard to student-athletes acquiring support services for classes, such as tutoring. Engstrom and Sedlacek (1991) concluded that universities should make an effort to educate the student body about negative

attitudes and misconceptions regarding student-athletes to help combat negative stereotypes (e.g., dumb jocks).

Engstrom and Sedlacek (1989) also studied the attitudes of students living in residence halls toward student-athletes. The purpose of the study was to examine the content and intensity of attitudes held by non-athlete students regarding student-athletes, given that the two frequently interacted and shared environments. The study included 125 participants from a large NCAA Division I university who lived in student housing (residence halls, student suites, etc.). The participants were randomly assigned to receive a “student” (neutral) form or a “student-athlete” form of the Revised SAS Student-Athlete measure. The results indicated that non-athletes students held significantly more negative attitudes towards student-athletes than towards their non-athlete peers. Specifically, non-athlete students were more sad, worried, and concerned about a student-athlete being assigned as their lab partner than a non-athlete student. As has been demonstrated in other students, gender effects were demonstrated in this study. Specifically, there were no significant differences between attitudes toward non-athlete students and student-athletes. This indicates that gender and athletic status interact and may represent different schema to those stereotyping.

Non-athlete students can possess negative stereotypes toward student-athlete populations, which can lead to aversive self-worth appraisals in their targets. Additionally, university faculty can have substantially higher influence over students’ sense of self, competence, etc. Leach and Connors (1984) proposed that university faculty members may hold more negative attitudes toward student-athletes than do any other institutionally recognized affiliate (students, administrators, alumni, etc.). The authors speculated that these negative attitudes may develop because of the incompatibility between the values of higher education and the goals of large

university athletic programs. Do university faculty actually hold such stereotypes and negative attitudes? Engstrom, Sedlacek, and McEwan (1995) concluded that they do. The purpose of their study was to determine whether faculty possess negative stereotypes toward revenue and non-revenue student-athletes. The study included 126 faculty (88 male, 40 female) from a major Eastern public research university. The methodology was similar to aforementioned studies in that the revised Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) Student-Athlete instrument was used. The faculty members were asked to complete one of two forms of the SAS (control and experimental conditions). Results indicated that faculty rated student-athlete academic abilities as significantly lower than non-athlete student academic abilities. Faculty also expressed more anger and frustration toward student-athletes for situations in which privileges or services were provided, compared to non-athlete students. In fact, faculty expressed significantly less positive attitudes and more negative attitudes towards student-athletes in seven out of the ten SAS situations. The authors concluded that faculty should make a concerted effort to recognize and understand the effect of these stereotypes on student-athletes.

Baucom and Lantz (2001) examined faculty attitudes and stereotypes toward student-athletes at a NCAA Division II university, specifically attitudes regarding academic performance. The sample included 409 faculty members from a Midwestern University that were evenly distributed by academic divisions. The faculty participants randomly completed one of three forms that were anonymously returned via campus mail services. The researchers utilized the Revised Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) Student-Athlete measure, and the three forms were distinguished by “male student,” “male non-revenue athlete,” or “male revenue athlete.” Results indicated that faculty perceived both revenue and non-revenue athletes in a significantly less positive way (e.g., subpar academic performance) compared to non-athlete students. Moreover,

Baucom and Lantz (2001) compared non-athlete student GPAs to student-athlete GPAs and found the GPAs of both groups to be almost identical. The researchers concluded that university faculty members endorsed negative stereotypes toward student-athletes, regardless of revenue or non-revenue status.

Research has consistently demonstrated that attitudes are formed based on affective, cognitive, and behavioral factors and that these attitudes contribute to the impressions people form about others. Generalizations of individuals based on limited information can lead to stereotyping of particular out-group members. Research is inconsistent and conflicting regarding academic success of college student-athletes compared to non-athlete students. This research also suggests that student-athletes are not only affected by negative stereotypes that students may hold, but also those held by university faculty. This can pose a significant problem because of the power differential that exists between student and teacher. Furthermore, there is a potential for faculty, arguably more so than students, to engage (even unconsciously) in harmful and damaging behaviors (e.g., lower classroom expectations, more stringent grading, etc.) motivated by stereotypes toward student-athletes.

The current study aims to expand and extend previous research regarding negative stereotypes toward college-level student-athletes, specifically at the NCAA division III level. The three main hypotheses are: a) non-athlete students and faculty will show significantly greater negative attitudes toward student-athletes than toward students, b) females will endorse significantly fewer negative stereotypes toward student-athletes than will males, and c) the frequency of self-reported sports-related behaviors for non-athlete students and faculty will be inversely correlated with negative stereotypes toward student-athletes. Frequency of sports-related behavior was added as a variable because according to social identity theory (Tajfel &

Turner, 1979), individuals strive to maintain group membership and superiority over other out-groups as a representation of their self-concept. Therefore, individuals who report high frequencies of sports-related behaviors should rate student-athletes more favorably than non-athlete students in an effort to maintain a sense of group membership (remain belonging to the in-group).

Method

Participants

The study sample consisted of college students and faculty at a small liberal arts NCAA division III university (approximately 1500 undergraduates) in the Northwest. The participants were solicited through university email and offered course credit for participation in the study. The initial sample consisted of a total of 232 participants, but after excluding incomplete data the final sample included 42 males and 113 females for a total of 155 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 26.3$; $SD = 12.2$).

Materials

The study materials included online survey software (www.qualtrics.com) that allowed participants' responses to be completely anonymous.

Measures

A potential problem with attempting to measure self-reported stereotypes is the tendency for people to provide socially desirable responses that reflect prevailing social norms rather than their own attitudes (van Herk Poortinga, & Verhallen, 2004). To counter these well-known tendencies, Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) developed the semantic differential scale to accurately measure implicit constructs such as attitudes and stereotypes. Semantic differentiation

is the successive allocation of a specific concept or scenario to a point in the multidimensional semantic space that is determined by selecting from among a set of given scaled semantic alternates (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). Essentially, the semantic differential scale requires a rater to judge a concept against a series of bi-polar adjective scales (e.g., happy or sad; hard or soft), which measure both direction and intensity. The overall results of the series of scales are theorized to be representative of implicit meaning the subject ascribes to the concept. Factor analyses of different series of bi-polar adjective scales have found three overarching factors that are in order of magnitude: evaluation, potency, and activity. Evaluation refers to the attitudinal variable in human thinking and is the most pervasive factor in human judgment, accounting for approximately half to three-quarters of the extractable variance between scales. Potency refers to power and things associated with it (e.g., large or small, thick or thin, strong or weak, heavy or light) and accounts for approximately half as much variance as the first factor. The third variable is mainly an “activity” variable in judgments, with some relation to physical abruptness or sharpness. This factor accounts for approximately half as much variance as the second factor. Examples of these adjectives include: hot or cold, fast or slow, sharp or dull, etc.

The Revised Situational Attitude Scale, Student-Athlete version (Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991), which consisted of ten student-athlete specific semantic differential scenarios, was used in the study (See Appendix A). There were two versions of the SAS: one included scenarios regarding “student-athletes” while the other (neutral form) included scenarios regarding “students.” The two versions were identical with the exception of these two words and allowed for comparisons between attitudes toward students and student-athletes. The online survey software enabled only one of the two surveys to be randomly presented to each participant, which increased group equivalence. A demographics questionnaire was also included in the

online survey (See Appendix B) asking about age, gender, role status at the university (student, student-athlete, or faculty), and frequency of participating in and watching athletics. The survey also included a certificate of participation receipt that could be printed and turned in for undergraduate course credit.

Psychometric properties of SAS

The semantic differential scale has been used to measure attitudes toward many different groups such as Arabs (Sergent, Woods, & Sedlacek, 1992), African Americans (Balenger, Hoffman, & Sedlacek, 1992), Hispanics (White & Sedlacek, 1987), and women (Minatoya & Sedlacek, 1983). It has been found to be generally valid and reliable, with reliability estimates ranging from .70 to .89. The SAS Student-Athlete measure has shown good validity and reliability estimates for both the neutral form and the student-athlete form. The original version of the SAS had Cronbach's alpha coefficients that ranged from .76 to .91 for the neutral form and .73 to .93 for the student-athlete form in a study measuring residence hall staff attitudes toward student-athletes (Engstrom, Sedlacek, & McEwan, 1995). In another study, the neutral form Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients ranged from .72 to .83 while the student-athlete form coefficients ranged from .61 to .93 (Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991). Engstrom, Sedlacek, and McEwan (1995) revised the SAS Student-Athlete measure to study faculty attitudes toward revenue and nonrevenue student-athletes. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients ranged from .65 to .96 across ten scenarios. The neutral form ranged from .70 to .95, the revenue student-athlete form ranged from .65 to .96, and the nonrevenue student-athlete form ranged from .60 to .97.

Design and Procedure

The current study used a quasi-experimental design. Participants were solicited to participate via a university email list serve for the entire undergraduate student and faculty population. The participants were provided an online link to the survey and notified that the survey would take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Participants were then informed about the voluntary and anonymous nature of the survey and the opportunity to receive a student course credit voucher at the end of the survey. Course credit vouchers were offered because some undergraduate courses require research participation as part of the course grading criteria.

Results

Before any statistical analyses were conducted, the data were screened for missing values and outliers. For the attitude scenarios, at least nine out of ten data points for each scenario needed to be completed for inclusion in the data analysis. Outliers were also examined for each dependent variable (scenarios). Although some outliers were identified for each of the ten scenarios, the influence of these outliers on the overall statistical analyses was not determined to be excessively influential. This is because each item for the scenarios was measured on a five-point scale. Therefore, item means for each scenario had limited differences, minimizing the effect of outliers on the statistical analyses.

Ten separate one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted to evaluate the difference, if any, in negative attitude scores towards attitude targets (students versus student-athletes) among non-athlete students and faculty across ten different scenarios. To control for Type I error across the ten univariate tests, a Bonferroni adjustment was conducted and alpha was set at .005 (.05/10) for each. To assess for normality, the kurtosis values for each test were examined. Since none of the kurtosis values exceeded a value of three, normality can be assumed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Homogeneity of variance can be assumed for scenario three because the result of Levene's Test was not significant, meaning that equality of variance can be assumed ($p > .05$). The one-way ANOVA for scenario three ("gets and 'A' in your class") was significant, $F(1, 153) = 9.16, p < .005$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$, indicating that there were significant differences in average negative attitude scores for the two conditions. The effect size estimate was medium ($\eta^2 = .06$), indicating six percent of the variance in the ratings could be accounted for by the attitude target the participant evaluated.

Next, follow up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the group means. The results indicated that on average the group receiving the student form had significantly greater negative attitude scores than the group receiving student-athlete form. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means ranged from .10 to .48.

Homogeneity of variance cannot be assumed for scenario five because the result of Levene's Test was significant, meaning that equality of variance cannot be assumed ($p < .05$). Therefore, results of this analysis should be interpreted with caution. The one-way ANOVA for scenario five ("advising and tutoring program") was significant, $F(1, 152) = 67.95, p < .005$, partial $\eta^2 = .31$, indicating that there were significant differences in average negative attitude scores for the two conditions. The effect size estimate was large ($\eta^2 = .31$). Almost one-third of the variance in attitude scores was accounted for by the attitude target the participants evaluated.

Next, follow up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the group means. The results indicated that the group receiving the student form on average had significantly greater negative attitude scores than the group receiving student-athlete form. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means ranged from .89 to 1.46.

Homogeneity of variance can be assumed for scenario six because the result of Levene's Test was not significant, meaning that equality of variance can be assumed ($p > .05$). The one-way ANOVA for scenario six ("received full scholarship") was significant, $F(1, 153) = 32.25$, $p < .005$, partial $\eta^2 = .17$, indicating that there were significant differences in average negative attitude scores for the two conditions. The effect size estimate was large ($\eta^2 = .17$), meaning that 17 percent of the variance in attitude scores may be explained by the attitude target the participants evaluated.

Next, follow up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the group means. The results indicated that on average the group receiving the student form had significantly greater negative attitude scores than the group receiving student-athlete form. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means ranged from .63 to 1.31.

Homogeneity of variance can be assumed for scenario seven because the result of Levene's Test was not significant, meaning that equality of variance can be assumed ($p > .05$). The one-way ANOVA for scenario seven ("lower college board scores") was significant, $F(1, 153) = 38.99$, $p < .005$, partial $\eta^2 = .20$, indicating that there were significant differences in average negative attitude scores for the two conditions. The effect size estimate was large ($\eta^2 = .20$), meaning that 20 percent of the variance in attitude scores may be explained by the attitude target the participants evaluated.

Next, follow up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the group means. The results indicated that on average the group receiving the student form had significantly greater negative attitude scores than the group receiving student-athlete form. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means ranged from .45 to .87.

However, the one-way ANOVA tests for scenario one, $F(1, 152) = .33$, ($p > .005$), partial $\eta^2 = .002$; scenario two, $F(1, 150) = 7.21$, ($p > .005$), partial $\eta^2 = .05$; scenario four, $F(1, 152) = 2.3$, ($p > .005$), partial $\eta^2 = .02$; scenario eight, $F(1, 153) = 4.55$, ($p > .005$), partial $\eta^2 = .03$; scenario nine, $F(1, 153) = 2.02$, ($p > .005$), partial $\eta^2 = .01$; and scenario ten, $F(1, 153) = .06$, ($p > .005$), partial $\eta^2 = .001$, were not significant. Means and standard deviations for results of hypothesis one are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Means and Standard Deviations, Results of One-way ANOVA of Differences in Attitude Target Form Across Scenarios. Higher Scores Represent Greater Negative Attitudes.

Scenario	Theme	Student		Student-athlete		$F(1, 153)$
		M	SD	M	SD	
Scenario 1	Withdraws from school	2.72	.55	2.77	.55	.33
Scenario 2	Driving expensive car	3.06	.58	2.80	.60	7.21
Scenario 3	Gets "A" in your class	2.37	.61	2.08	.57	*9.16
Scenario 4	Misses one of your classes	2.86	.51	2.98	.47	2.30
Scenario 5	Advising and tutoring program	2.85	1.06	1.68	.67	*67.95
Scenario 6	Receives full scholarship	3.23	1.11	2.26	1.01	*32.25
Scenario 7	Lower college board scores	3.71	.72	3.04	.60	*38.99
Scenario 8	Pursue studies at slower pace	2.86	.59	2.67	.52	4.55
Scenario 9	Achievements in newspaper	2.11	.76	1.94	.74	2.02
Scenario 10	Gets a 2.2 GPA	3.23	.63	3.20	.47	.18

* $p < .05$

A 2 x 3 factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the differences, if any, between attitude targets and gender on negative attitude scores. Specifically,

males and females were randomly assigned to one of two attitude target groups, student form or student-athlete form.

To test the hypothesis that females reported less negative attitude scores towards student-athletes compared to males, the interaction effect for gender and attitude target, and the simple effects for gender for each scenario were explored. To control for Type I error across the ten univariate tests, a Bonferroni adjustment was conducted and alpha was set at .005 (.05/10) for each. Results indicated no significant interaction effects for scenario one, $F(1, 148) = 2.80$, ($p > .005$), $\eta^2 = .02$; scenario two, $F(1, 146) = 2.85$, ($p > .005$), $\eta^2 = .02$; scenario three, $F(1, 149) = 1.53$, ($p > .005$), $\eta^2 = .01$; scenario four, $F(1, 148) = .63$, ($p > .005$), $\eta^2 = .004$; scenario five, $F(1, 148) = 4.16$, ($p > .005$), $\eta^2 = .03$; scenario six, $F(1, 149) = 1.69$, ($p > .005$), $\eta^2 = .01$; scenario seven, $F(1, 149) = .63$, ($p > .005$), $\eta^2 = .004$; scenario eight, $F(1, 149) = 2.77$, ($p > .005$), $\eta^2 = .02$; scenario nine, $F(1, 149) = 1.36$, ($p > .005$), $\eta^2 = .01$; or scenario ten, $F(1, 149) = 4.69$, ($p > .005$), $\eta^2 = .03$. Simple effects and pairwise comparisons were not explored because no significant interactions were found for all 10 of the ANOVAs.

Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted to determine if significant relationships existed between frequency of sports-related behavior and attitude scores on 10 scenarios among students, student-athletes, and faculty. Using the Bonferroni approach to control for Type I error across the ten correlations, a p value of less than .005 (.05/10 = .005) was required for significance.

The results of the correlational analyses indicated that none of the ten correlations were statistically significant for the overall frequency of sports-related behavior (student, student-athletes, and faculty grouped together). Further, no significant differences for student and faculty evaluators were found. However, a significant negative relationship was found between

frequency of sports-related behavior and scenario six, indicating that student-athletes who engage in more frequent sports-related behaviors tend to have less negative attitudes towards student-athletes, $r(15) = -.65, p < .005$. The 95% confidence interval for the population correlation coefficient would be between a value of .25 and .86.

Finally, to test the internal consistency of the SAS for both the student and student-athlete forms, a Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was conducted. Reliability estimates for the student form ranged from .67 to .97 with an average reliability coefficient of .88 across the ten scenarios. For the student-athlete form, reliability estimates ranged from .67 to .96 with an average reliability coefficient of .85 across the ten scenarios. Cronbach's alpha standards, according to George and Mallery (2003), show that the internal consistency of both the student and student-athlete forms qualify as psychometrically "good" measures (reliability coefficients between .80 and .90).

Discussion

There were three hypotheses in the current study: a) non-athlete students and faculty will report significantly greater negative attitudes toward student-athletes than towards students, b) females will endorse significantly fewer negative stereotypes toward student-athletes than will males, and c) the frequency of self-reported sports-related behaviors for non-athlete students and faculty will be inversely correlated with negative stereotypes toward student-athletes. Concerning the first hypothesis, students and faculty reported significantly lower negative attitude ratings toward student-athletes compared to non-athlete students in four of the ten scenarios. For the remaining six scenarios, there were no significant differences in attitude ratings. Interestingly, these results were significant in the opposite hypothesized direction. Contradictory to the results of previous literature (Enstrom and Sedlacek, 1989, 1991; Engstrom,

Sedlacek, and McEwan, 1995; Baucom and Lantz, 2001), it appears that student-athletes at this small NCAA division III university were viewed less negatively than students when “a student-athlete gets an A in your class,” when “the University announces the creation of an expanded advising and tutoring program for student-athletes,” when “a student-athlete in your class has received a full scholarship to attend this university,” and when “a student-athlete in your class was admitted with college board scores significantly lower than those of the general student population.”

The second hypothesis was not supported, meaning that males and females did not significantly differ in attitudes toward student-athletes and non-athlete students. This result could, however, be an artifact of low male representation in the sample. The female to male participant ratio was almost three to one. Finally, the third hypothesis was not supported either: frequency of sports-related behavior was not significantly related to attitude scores toward student-athletes. The only finding of interest was that there was a negative relationship between frequency of sports-related behavior and attitude scores on scenario six of the student-athlete form (a student-athlete in your class has received a full scholarship to attend this university) among student-athlete participants. This means that student-athletes who reported high frequency of sports-related behavior also reported lower negative attitude ratings toward student-athletes for scenario six.

These data suggest that student-athletes are viewed less negatively than student attitude targets, which is contrary to many negative student-athlete stereotype studies reported previously. Gender, as well as frequency of sports-related behavior, was not related to stereotypes toward student-athletes.

There are several limitations that affect the generalizability of results for the current study. The difficulty in studying stereotypes toward different groups is positive impression management by study participants. Although a situational attitude scale was primarily utilized to limit this tendency, the possibility still exists. Methodological limitations are also of concern. First, the measure used to examine attitudes included items on a five-point scale. Because the range for scores is so small, statistical significance may be attenuated due to the low variability in possible scores. Second, frequency of sports-related behavior was measured via an aggregate score of two self-report questions. Much like with the SAS items, the variability is fairly low and could lead to attenuated correlations. Finally, approximately 30 percent of total participants had incomplete data. This high incomplete data rate may be a result of student participants completing the questionnaire solely for the research participation voucher at the end of the survey to fulfill course research participation requirements.

Another possible limitation to the current study is that there was no manipulation check to determine whether the independent variables actually had an effect on the participant's attitude responses. Specifically, it is unknown whether attitude target form (student versus student-athlete) actually had an effect on the attitude scores for the ten scenarios. Also, a method for detecting if participants selected attitude items at random, possibly to complete the survey quickly, was not implemented.

Limitations based on the study sample are also possible. First, all participants were from a small NCAA division III private university in the northwest. There were significantly more females (113) that completed the online survey, compared to males (42). There were also more non-athlete students (91) who completed the online survey compared to student-athletes (30) and faculty (34). Finally, the sample consisted overwhelmingly of Caucasian participants (87

percent), with little ethnic/racial representation of any other groups. Because all of these groups were underrepresented in the sample, the generalizability of the results is limited.

History effects may also have confounded the results of the current study. The university from which participants were solicited recently (approximately one year earlier) voted to bring back the football program after originally cutting it in the early 1990s. The proposition fueled months of heated debate among students, professors, and alumni. It may not be surprising that participants rated student-athletes more positively than students in lieu of the new football program and the hype that accompanies it.

As noted above, there are several possible limits to the current study's validity and generalizability. However, the overall results suggest that traditional negative stereotypes toward student-athletes in higher education did not hold true for this study. Furthermore, non-athlete students generally received greater negative evaluation than student-athletes. These results contradict previous literature on stereotypes toward college student-athletes, namely that college student-athletes are evaluated more negatively than their non-athlete peers by faculty and students (Enstrom & Sedlacek, 1989, 1991; Engstrom, Sedlacek, & McEwan, 1995; Baucom & Lantz, 2001). Also, gender or frequency of sports-related behavior does not appear to have a substantial influence on attitudes toward student-athletes.

The current study also has applied implications for university faculty, including coaching staff, professors, and counselors. Whether student-athletes are being viewed in a positive or negative light compared to the general student body, implicit biases or stereotypes likely exist. Student-athletes not only juggle the roles of student and athlete but may also be subjected to the burden of stereotype threat. Steele, (1997) described stereotype threat as, "the event of a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs becoming self-relevant, usually as a plausible

interpretation for something one is doing, for an experience one is having, or for a situation one is in, that has relevance to one's self-definition" (p. 616). For student-athletes, the domain would be academia. Steele (1997) theorized that the threat individuals feel about fulfilling a negative stereotype can lead to distress, and eventually, underperformance in the domain. Additionally, if individuals become identified with the particular domain, it becomes an aspect of their personal identity. In this situation, Steele (1997) theorized that an individual might be pressured to de-identify with the domain. This means that for the individual experiencing stereotype threat, a defensive response of reconceptualizing the sense of self may occur, removing the domain (academics) as an aspect of self-identity, thereby removing the domain as a basis for self-evaluation. For student-athletes, this may manifest by a seeming lack of interest or motivation in academics or overidentification with athletics. Ryan and Deci's (2000; 2002) self-determination theory of student-athletes not feeling competent or autonomous in class or feeling a sense of relatedness to classmates or faculty provides an equally adequate explanation.

There are several ways to counteract or reduce stereotype threat to student-athletes in the classroom. Steele (1997) recommended strategies for reducing this effect. The first line of defense is establishing an optimistic teacher/coach/counselor-student-athlete relationship. Their investment in the student-athlete's success will help to counteract stereotype threat. Concomitantly, finding ways to challenge student-athletes in the classroom shows respect for their intellectual potential, rather than an ability-demeaning remediation of some sort.—Also, creating academic norms that stress the expandability of intelligence has been shown to be an effective means of neutralizing stereotype threat (Steele, 1997). By acknowledging that intelligence is dynamic, a sense of personal relevance can be acquired, thus diminishing the sense that intelligence is a fixed limitation to an entire group (student-athletes).

Although much research is still required to develop a greater understanding of the consequences of being a student-athlete in a university setting, it appears that the presence of negative stereotypes towards this group may be institution specific. Nonetheless, universities should make a concerted effort, possibly through faculty training programs, to become aware of implicit biases and stereotypes toward student-athletes. Student-athletes can be considered the last acceptable bigotry in academia, but hopefully universities can step up to the plate and level the playing field for student-athletes via institutional change and individual awareness of this issue.

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Appendix A.

SAS

You are invited to participate in a research study examining attitudes towards a variety of college students. This study is intended for undergraduate students or faculty who are **18 years or older**.

If you decide to submit the survey with your **anonymous** answers, the data will be used in the study. If at any point you wish to cancel the survey, **NO Data** will be submitted. You may feel free to cancel the survey at any time. Further, the security of information transmitted through the internet cannot be guaranteed.

At the end of this survey there is a “**certificate of participation**” page. If you print out this page you can put your name on it and submit it for research participation credit in Psychology or other courses that may require it.

By proceeding with this survey, you acknowledge and agree with the previous terms listed above.

This questionnaire measures how you think and feel about a number of situations that might occur in the classroom. It is not a test so there are no right or wrong answers. The questionnaire is anonymous so please **DO NOT SIGN YOUR NAME ANYWHERE**.

Each item or situation is followed by 10 descriptive word scales. Your task is to select, for each descriptive scale, the rating which best describes YOUR feelings towards the item.

Sample item: ending classes this spring

Happy A B C D E Sad

You would indicate the direction and extent of your feelings, (e.g. you might select “B” by indicating the corresponding bubble beneath it. PLEASE RESPOND TO ALL WORD SCALES.

Sometimes you may feel as though you had the same item before on the questionnaire. This will not be the case, so DO NOT LOOK BACK AND FORTH through the items. Do not try to remember how you checked similar items earlier in the questionnaire. MAKE EACH ITEM A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT. Respond as honestly as possible without puzzling over individual items. Respond with your first impressions wherever possible.

Thank you!

I. A (student/student-athlete) in your class withdraws from school.

1. likely	A	B	C	D	E	unlikely
2. unconcerned	A	B	C	D	E	concerned
3. trusting	A	B	C	D	E	suspicious
4. sad	A	B	C	D	E	happy
5. approving	A	B	C	D	E	disapproving
6. embarrassed	A	B	C	D	E	proud
7. negative	A	B	C	D	E	positive
8. expected	A	B	C	D	E	unexpected
9. neutral	A	B	C	D	E	disappointed
10. bad	A	B	C	D	E	good

II. You see a (student/student-athlete) driving an expensive sports car.

11. jealous	A	B	C	D	E	disinterested
12. resentful	A	B	C	D	E	accepting
13. positive	A	B	C	D	E	negative
14. trusting	A	B	C	D	E	suspicious
15. indignant	A	B	C	D	E	understanding
16. fair	A	B	C	D	E	unfair
17. tolerable	A	B	C	D	E	intolerable
18. good	A	B	C	D	E	bad
19. angered	A	B	C	D	E	pleased
20. expected	A	B	C	D	E	unexpected

III. A (student/student-athlete) gets an A in your class.

- | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---------------|------------|
| 21. happy | A | B | C | D | E | sad |
| 22. unexcited A | B | C | D | E | excited | |
| 23. likely | A | B | C | D | E | unlikely |
| 24. suspicious | A | B | C | D | E | trusting |
| 25. possible | A | B | C | D | E | impossible |
| 26. hopeful | A | B | C | D | E | hopeless |
| 27. surprised A | B | C | D | E | not surprised | |
| 28. fair | A | B | C | D | E | unfair |
| 29. expected A | B | C | D | E | unexpected | |
| 30. delighted A | B | C | D | E | displeased | |

IV. A (student/student-athlete) misses one of your classes.

- | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|-------------|------------|
| 31. unconcerned | A | B | C | D | E | concerned |
| 32. tolerant | A | B | C | D | E | intolerant |
| 33. disappointed | A | B | C | D | E | neutral |
| 34. accepting A | B | C | D | E | resentful | |
| 35. unexpected | A | B | C | D | E | expected |
| 36. wrong | A | B | C | D | E | right |
| 37. disturbed A | B | C | D | E | undisturbed | |
| 38. suspicious | A | B | C | D | E | trusting |
| 39. pleased | A | B | C | D | E | angered |
| 40. Bad | A | B | C | D | E | good |

- V. The University announces the creation of an expanded advising and tutoring program for (students/student-athletes).

41. undisturbed	A	B	C	D	E	disturbed
42. suspicious	A	B	C	D	E	trusting
43. angered	A	B	C	D	E	pleased
44. tolerant	A	B	C	D	E	intolerant
45. appropriate	A	B	C	D	E	inappropriate
46. resentful	A	B	C	D	E	accepting
47. understanding	A	B	C	D	E	indignant
48. acceptable	A	B	C	D	E	unacceptable
49. displeased	A	B	C	D	E	pleased
50. Calm	A	B	C	D	E	upset

- VI. A (student/student-athlete) in your class has received a full scholarship to attend this University.

51. wrong	A	B	C	D	E	right
52. happy	A	B	C	D	E	sad
53. embarrassed	A	B	C	D	E	proud
54. approving	A	B	C	D	E	disapproving
55. appropriate	A	B	C	D	E	inappropriate
56. trusting	A	B	C	D	E	suspicious
57. fair	A	B	C	D	E	unfair

58. angered A B C D E pleased

59. accepting A B C D E resentful

60. delighted A B C D E displeased

VII. A (student/student-athlete) in your class was admitted with college board scores significantly lower than those of the general student population.

61. fair A B C D E unfair

62. unexpected A B C D E expected

63. concerned A B C D E unconcerned

64. calm A B C D E upset

65. undisturbed A B C D E disturbed

66. wrong A B C D E right

67. happy A B C D E sad

68. suspicious A B C D E trusting

69. accepting A B C D E resentful

70. Proud A B C D E embarrassed

VIII. A (student/student-athlete) decides to pursue his/her program of study at a slower pace.

71. concerned A B C D E unconcerned

72. undisturbed A B C D E disturbed

73. wrong A B C D E right

74. happy A B C D E sad

75. attracted A B C D E repelled

76. pleased A B C D E displeased
77. expected A B C D E unexpected
78. appropriate A B C D E inappropriate
79. unreasonable A B C D E reasonable
80. trusting A B C D E suspicious

IX. The out-of-class achievements of one the (students/student-athletes) in your class is featured in the campus newspaper.

81. disturbed A B C D E undisturbed
82. embarrassed A B C D E proud
83. appropriate A B C D E inappropriate
84. happy A B C D E sad
85. disinterested A B C D E interested
86. angered A B C D E pleased
87. bad A B C D E good
88. fair A B C D E unfair
89. glad A B C D E mad
90. approving A B C D E disapproving

X. One of the (students/student-athletes) in your class received a 2.2 GPA last semester.

91. calm A B C D E upset
92. disturbed A B C D E undisturbed
93. bad A B C D E good

94. reasonable	A	B	C	D	E	unreasonable
95. unacceptable	A	B	C	D	E	acceptable
96. unexpected	A	B	C	D	E	expected
97. displeased	A	B	C	D	E	pleased
98. unconcerned	A	B	C	D	E	concerned
99. unlikely	A	B	C	D	E	likely
100. sad	A	B	C	D	E	happy

Appendix B.

Demographics

1. Gender:

A = Male

B = Female

C = Other Identification

2. The racial or ethnic group to which you identify:

A = African American

B = Caucasian (European decent)

C = Asian (Pacific Islander)

D = American Indian (Alaskan native)

E = Hispanic (Latin American)

F = Other _____

3. What is your age in years? _____

4. Please indicate whether you are one of the following:

A = Non-athlete student

B = University faculty (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, etc.)

5. If you are a STUDENT, please indicate whether you are a current member of one or more of the current athletic teams:

Football

Basketball

Soccer

Baseball

Softball

Lacrosse

Wrestling

Swimming

Golf

Cross Country

Track & Field

Tennis Volleyball

6. If you are a student, please indicate how many years you have been at the university. _____

7. Would you consider yourself as an “athletic person”?

A = Yes

B = No

8. Your level of physical activity in a typical week:

None 1 2 3 4 5 Daily

9. Your level of observing sporting activities (watching athletic events, in person, on TV, in the media, etc.) in a typical week:

None 1 2 3 4 5 Daily

10. How “important” is it for you to be able to watch sports as frequently as you like?

Not important 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

11. Please report how many years you participated in sports as a child until present day:_____.

Appendix C.

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Attitudes toward College Students

Dear Students and Faculty,

I am writing you this e-mail to request your collaboration in the study, ***Attitudes toward College Students***. This research study is under the direction of Tamara Tasker, Psy.D. at Pacific University. This research supports my master's thesis, possible poster presentation and paper presentation at a research conference. Data collection will involve collection of (Student/Faculty) attitudes toward different college students. Participation in this study would be incredibly beneficial for my research. The only exclusionary criterion is that participants must be 18 years old or older to participate. Data collection will take approximately 10 minutes to complete per participant. Thank you for your time.

HERE IS THE LINK TO THE SURVEY: [Survey LINK]

Submitted Respectfully,

Tamara Tasker, Psy.D., Faculty Supervisor

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